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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2495

INFO RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE 5048

RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE 8109

RUEADWW/WHITEHOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS

FROM HABIB

E.O. 12065: RDS-1,3,4 6/14/02 (GRCVE, BRANDON) OR-M

TAGS: MOPS, PLO, XF, UNSC, LE, IS, SY

SUBJECT: HABIB MISSION: MEETING WITH BEGIN MONDAY

- MORNING, JUNE 14

REF: A) STATE 163009, B) STATE 163040

1. (S - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. JOINED BY AMBASSADOR LEWIS AND DRAPER. I MET WITH
BEGIN IN HIS OFFICE FOR ONE HOUR THIS MORNING, JUNE 14.
BEGIN WAS JOINED BY AVNER AND HIS MILITARY SECRETARY.
COLONEL NEBO. BEGIN APPEARED IN MUCH BETTER SPIRITS THEN
ON THE PREVIOUS DAY. HE CONFIDED THAT HE HAD BEEN

SECRET

State Dept. review completed

SECRET

STATE

82 8824244

SSO

PAGE 002

NC 8824244

TOR: 141350Z JUN 82

SUFFERING EXTREME PAIN IN HIS KNEE AND UPPER LEG. AS HAPPENED OCCASIONALLY. WHILE THE MEETING WAS INTERRUPTED BY PHONE CALLS--INCLUDING ONE OF MINE WITH SHARON--WE WERE ABLE TO REVIEW OUR BASIC GOALS AND APPROACHES AND CORRECT SOME OF THE MISINTERPRETATIONS FLOWING FROM YESTERDAY'S EXCHANGES.

3. I TOLD BEGIN THAT I HAD RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SECRETARY (1) TO REVIEW WITH THE PRIME MINISTER OUR BASIC APPROACHES AND OUR BASIC GOALS FOR THE AREA AND (2) TO GO TO BEIRUT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IN PURSUIT OF OUR POLICY OBJECTIVE OF STRENGTHENING LEBANESE GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

4. BEGIN SAID THAT LATE LAST NIGHT HE HAD RECEIVED TELEPHONE CALLS FROM BOTH SHARON AND ARENS. HE SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN ASTONISHED TO HEAR FROM ARENS THAT HE SUPPOSEDLY HAD SAID TO ME THAT ISRAEL PLANNED TO STAY IN LEBANON FOR FIVE YEARS. HE SAID HE HAD TOLD ARENS THAT, TO THE CONTRARY, HE HAD TOLD ME THAT ISRAEL WAS PREPARED TO LEAVE LEBANON AS EARLY AS TWO WEEKS FROM NOW, PROVIDED ADEQUATE ARRANGEMENTS WERE MADE TO CONTROL THE BUFFER ZONE. IF NO SUCH ADEQUATE ARRANGEMENTS WERE MADE, AS HE SAID TO ME, ISRAEL WOULD STAY FOR TEN (SIC) YEARS. HE SAID HE WAS ASTONISHED AT THIS MISREPORTING OF HIS WORDS.

5. SAM AND I IN REPLY SAID THAT WE HAD ACCURATELY REPORTED THE THRUST OF HIS REMARKS ON THAT SUBJECT, NOTING THAT HE HAD USED "FIVE" YEARS, RATHER THAN "TEN," A POINT WHICH DAVID KIMCHE AGREED WITH WHEN HE JOINED THE MEETING LATER. (NOTE: AFTER THE MEETING ENDED, LEWIS TOLD AVNER PRIVATELY THAT THE CONFUSION ABOUT SOME OF BEGIN'S WORDS YESTERDAY APPARENTLY STEMMED FROM PRELIMINARY TELEPHONIC REPORTING ON THE MEETING. LEWIS TOLD AVNER THAT THE CABLE REPORT REACHED WASHINGTON ONLY AFTER THE SECRETARY SPOKE WITH ARENS. AVNER THOUGHT THIS CLARIFICATION WAS IMPORTANT AND SAID HE WOULD EXPLAIN IT TO BEGIN.)

6. BEGIN THEN TURNED TO OUR INQUIRIES MADE OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER LAST NIGHT TO THE EFFECT THAT THE IDF WAS IN THE BAABDA AREA. BEGIN CHARACTERISTICALLY FOCUSED ON A

SECRET

SECRET

STATE

82 8824244

SSO

PAGE 003

NC 8824244

TOR: 141350Z JUN 82

SUPPOSED U.S. ACCUSATION THAT IDF TROOPS HAD SURROUNDED OR ENTERED THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE IN DRAMATIC FASHION. I COUNTERED THAT THIS WAS NOT THE ALLEGATION. THE PROBLEM, AS DESCRIBED BY OUR AMBASSADOR AS AN EYEWITNESS AT 0800 THIS MORNING, WAS THAT THE IDF WAS IN THE AREA OF THE PALACE LAST NIGHT AND EVEN THIS MORNING. DILLON HAD REPORTED THAT ISRAELI TANKS WERE WITHIN 100 METERS OF HIS RESIDENCE AND THAT OTHER TANKS WERE RINGING THE AREA OF THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE AND THE DEFENSE MINISTRY. I DESCRIBED FOR BEGIN'S BENEFIT THE TERRAIN AND THE RELATIVE LOCATION OF THE PALACE, DILLON'S RESIDENCE, AND THE DEFENSE MINISTRY.

7. AT THIS POINT, BEGIN OFFERED TO HELP ME GET IN TOUCH BY PHONE WITH SHARON AND I ACCEPTED THE OFFER. I HAD A FIFTEEN-MINUTE TALK WITH SHARON IN FRONT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, DURING WHICH I STRESSED INTER ALIA THE FOLLOWING:

--IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT THE IDF MOVE OUT OF THE BAABDA AREA SINCE ITS PRESENCE THERE WAS A FORM OF INTIMIDATION. THE LEBANESE LEADERS COULD NOT GET IN TO THIS AREA TO MEET WITH THE PRESIDENT TO DISCUSS SUCH QUESTIONS AS A NATIONAL UNITY CABINET WHICH WAS IN ISRAEL'S INTERESTS AS WELL AS THE U.S.

--WE ARE TRYING TO PRESERVE THE AUTHORITY OF SARKIS, BUT

EXDIS

THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE AS LONG AS THERE IS THE PERCEPTION OF ISRAELI INTIMIDATION.

--I INTENDED TO GET TO BEIRUT LATER TODAY AND WOULD PREFER TO ARRIVE IN THE BAABDA AREA WITHOUT A HEAVY IDF PRESENCE.

= IN RESPONSE, SHARON EXPLAINED THE REASONS FOR HAVING MOVED INTO BAABDA, WHICH WAS BASICALLY BECAUSE THE PLO IS NOT OBSERVING THE CEASEFIRE AND HE HAD TO PROTECT HIS FORCES. WHEN I ASKED WHY THE IDF HAD NOT STOOD IN PLACE

SECRET

SECRET

STATE

82 8824244

SSO

PAGE 004

NC 8824244

TOR: 141350Z JUN 82

WHEN THE CEASEFIRE WAS DECLARED, SHARON SAID HE HAD PREVIOUSLY MADE CLEAR TO ME AND SAM THAT HIS INTENTION WAS TO CUT THE BEIRUT-DAMASCUS ROAD SO AS TO PREVENT ALL MOVEMENT OF MILITARY TRAFFIC ON THAT ROUTE. THIS HAD BEEN HIS OBJECTIVE BEFORE THE CEASEFIRE AND WE SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN SURPRISED AT WHAT HE DID.

8. HE AND I ON THE TELEPHONE THEN GOT DOWN TO SPECIFICS AS WHERE THE IDF MIGHT GO. I SUGGESTED THAT HE MIGHT RETURN THE FORCES DOWN THE ROAD FROM WHICH THEY HAD COME, BUT HE REFUSED TO DO SO. HE SAID HE WOULD SEND THEM FURTHER EAST INSTEAD. I MADE IT TOTALLY CLEAR THAT HE WOULD NOT WANT THE IMPRESSION LEFT THAT I HAD ASKED HIM TO MOVE HIS FORCES FURTHER EAST; I ONLY WANTED THE IDF PRESENCE REMOVED OR REDUCED IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA OF THE SEAT OF GOVERNMENT SO AS TO LIFT THE IMPRESSION OF ISRAELI INTIMIDATION. SHARON NOTED, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT HIS FORCES FOR NOW LINKED UP WITH THE PHALANGE, THAT HE HAD BEEN GIVEN A WARM RECEPTION AT THE GRAND SERAI, AND THAT HE HAD NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO ESTABLISH LIAISON WITH AN OFFICIAL LEBANESE REPRESENTATIVE (ALTHOUGH I NOTED THAT THE LEBANESE A DAY EARLIER HAD AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO USING JOHNNY ABDU). I SAID I WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH THE ISRAELI AUTHORITIES LATER TODAY REGARDING THE EXACT ROAD ROUTE I WOULD USE TO THE AREA AND URGED HIM NOT TO LINE UP HIS TROOPS TO GIVE ME A SALUTE AS I PASSED BY AS HE JESTINGLY HAD SUGGESTED.

9. AFTER THIS PHONE CALL, I RETURNED TO DESCRIBING TO BEGIN OUR POSITION ON BASIS OF REFTELS. THESE WERE, I SAID:

- (1) THE STRENGTHENING OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT,
- (2) A DRAMATIC REDUCTION OF SYRIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON IN THE CONTEXT OF ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL,
- (3) AN END TO THE PLO AS AN EXTRATERRITORIAL ELEMENT IN LEBANON AND ABSORPTION OF THE PLO THERE INTO A FRAMEWORK RECEPTIVE TO LEBANESE AUTHORITY, AS WAS THE CASE PRIOR TO THE GROWTH OF PLO AND SYRIAN MILITARY POWER IN LEBANON,

SECRET

SECRET

STATE

82 8824244

SSO

PAGE 005

NC 8824244

TOR: 141350Z JUN 82

(4) AN END TO THE HADDAD ENCLAVE AND TO HADDAD'S INDEPENDENT STATUS AND RETIREMENT OF HADDAD HIMSELF WITH AMNESTY OR INTEGRATION OF HIS PERSONNEL INTO GOL/LEBANESE SOCIETY --AND AGREEMENT BY THE OTHER LEBANESE POLITICAL FACTIONS TO WORK TO ACHIEVE THEIR OBJECTIVES IN COOPERATION WITH AND THROUGH THE LEGITIMATE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT. (NOTE: UPON REQUEST, LEWIS GAVE AVNER THIS FORMULATION AGAIN ON THE SIDE TO ASSURE ACCURACY OF THE ISRAELI RECORD.);

(5) STRENGTHENING PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS, AND

(6) DEALING WITH THE CRITICAL REGIONAL DIMENSIONS OF THE PROBLEM.

10. WHILE I WENT THROUGH THESE POINTS, BEGIN INTERRUPTED FREQUENTLY:

--HE TOOK EXCEPTION TO THE TERM "DRAMATIC REDUCTION" OF THE SYRIAN PRESENCE. THERE WAS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THIS CONCEPT AND FULL WITHDRAWAL. HE ARGUED THAT SINCE THE U.S. WANTED FULL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, IT SHOULD BE EQUAL TREATMENT AS REGARDS THE SYRIANS. MOREOVER, HE SAID I SHOULD TELL SARKIS THAT HE SHOULD WITHDRAW HIS INVITATION FOR AN ADF, AND THEREBY GET RID OF SYRIA. IN RESPONSE, I SAID THAT HIS QUESTION ABOUT A "DRAMATIC REDUCTION" WAS REASONABLE. HE SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT OUR ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE WAS THAT "ALL FOREIGN FORCES" IN LEBANON SHOULD WITHDRAW, INCLUDING THE SYRIANS, AND THAT THIS WAS PARALLEL WITH ISRAEL'S OWN POSITION.

--BEGIN TOOK THE STRONGEST EXCEPTION TO OUR FORMULATION FOR HADDAD AND HIS MEN. HE SAID HE COULD NOT ACCEPT ONE WORD OF THE U.S. FORMULA. IT WAS "TOTALLY, UTTERLY, AND UNEQUIVOCALLY UNACCEPTABLE TO ISRAEL." HE SAID HE HAD TO

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SAY THIS BECAUSE SILENCE MIGHT BE INTERPRETED AS AGREEMENT. ISRAEL WILL NOT LEAVE IN THE LURCH A FRIEND--WHO WAS TWICE WOUNDED--SINCE ISRAEL WAS ACCUSTOMED TO BEING LEFT IN THE LURCH ITSELF. HE STRONGLY CONDEMNED AS PERJURATIVE

SECRET

SECRET

STATE

82 8824244

SSO

PAGE 006

NC 8824244

TOR: 141350Z JUN 82

THE TERM "AMNESTY" AND WAS ONLY SLIGHTLY LESS SARCASTIC ABOUT THE TERM "RETIREMENT."

--THE HADDAD SITUATION WAS A GREAT PROBLEM. IT WOULD REQUIRE CAREFUL CABINET CONSIDERATION AND DECISION. HE SAID HE RECOGNIZED THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT--WHEN I REMINDED HIM--THAT THERE SHOULD BE A STRONGER CENTRAL LEBANESE AUTHORITY OVER ALL OF LEBANON. I ASKED WHETHER THERE WAS ANY FUNDAMENTAL ISRAELI OBJECTIVE TO ALLOWING LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY IN SOUTH LEBANON.

--HE SAID NO, AND THEN SAID WE MUST CONSULT CAREFULLY ON THIS ISSUE: "LET US REASON TOGETHER."

--AS FOR PEACEKEEPING, BEGIN REITERATED SOME OF HIS PRIOR NEGATIVE COMMENTS ABOUT UNIFIL. HE CHARACTERIZED UNIFIL AS "USEFUL BUT DISAPPOINTING." A UN FORCE WAS DANGEROUS BECAUSE OF THE HOSTILITY TO ISRAEL WITHIN THE SC AND GA, RECALLING THE THREE CONCEPTS HE HAD DISCUSSED PREVIOUSLY WITH ME. BEGIN SAID HE AND THE CABINET HAD NOW DECIDED THEY WOULD PROPOSE ONLY ONE OPTION: A MULTINATIONAL FORCE (MNF) ALONG THE LINES OF THE SINAI MFO, PREFERABLY WITH A U.S. COMPONENT. HOWEVER, HE ACKNOWLEDGED THE U.S. CERTAINLY HAS A RIGHT TO KEEP OPEN OTHER OPTIONS IF IT WISHED. HOWEVER, PEACEKEEPING IN THE UNIFIL SENSE HAD BECOME OUTMODED. IT COULD NOT PREVENT BLOODSHED. THE STATUS QUO COULD NOT BE RESTORED.

--I MADE IT CLEAR THAT WE REMAIN CONVINCED THAT A UN ORGANIZATION, BUT WITH A STRONGER MANDATE THAN UNIFIL NOW ENJOYED, HAD TO BE KEPT OPEN AS A POSSIBILITY. WE MIGHT HAVE TO TRY THE UN ROUTE FIRST. BEGIN SAID HE STILL PREFERRED AN MFO MODEL. THE MFO WAS A GOOD FORCE AND WELL ARMED. HE THOUGHT THE FRENCH WOULD BE HAPPY TO JOIN AN MNF. SAM LEWIS STRESSED ONCE AGAIN THAT IF SOMETHING LIKE UNIFIL WERE USED, A MUCH STRONGER MANDATE WOULD BE ESSENTIAL. KIMCHE, SUPPORTED BY BEGIN, SAID THAT CONSISTENT WITH ISRAEL'S PREFERENCE FOR AN MNF, ISRAEL WOULD PREFER THAT THE U.S. EFFORTS CONCENTRATE FIRST ON ACHIEVING AN MNF RATHER THAN A UN FORCE, AND THEN DECIDE WHETHER AN MNF WAS FEASIBLE BEFORE RESORTING TO THE UN OPTION.

SECRET

SECRET

STATE

82 8824244

SSO

PAGE 007

NC 8824244

TOR: 141350Z JUN 82

EQUALLY UNDESIRABLE; HE ADDED, WOULD BE PARALLEL EFFORTS AT THE TWO OPTIONS. THIS WOULD SIMPLY WEAKEN THE OVERALL CASE FOR A FORCE ACCEPTABLE AND USEFUL TO ISRAEL.

--ON THIS LAST POINT, I SAID WE WOULD DO OUR BEST UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES. WE NEEDED TO HAVE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE THE DETAILS ON WHAT ISRAEL WAS PROPOSING FOR THE MNF ARRANGEMENT, AS HAD BEEN PROMISED AT THE MEETING LAST NIGHT. KIMCHE AND BEGIN EXPLAINED THAT THE EXPERTS' WORK WOULD HAVE TO BE REVIEWED BY THE MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE; THEREFORE IT WOULD TAKE SEVERAL DAYS AT BEST.

--I THEN STRESSED STRONGLY--QUOTING THE SECRETARY IN HIS TALK WITH ARENS--THAT WE WILL WORK TO SEE THAT ARRANGEMENTS ARE ADEQUATE FOR ISRAEL'S INTERESTS. I MADE THIS POINT REPEATEDLY, BUT ALSO NOTED THE SECRETARY'S VIEWS THAT BILATERAL AGREEMENTS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND INDIVIDUAL TROOP CONTRIBUTOR NATIONS WERE PROBABLY NOT POSSIBLE OR FEASIBLE. THIS IS A SUBJECT ON WHICH WE SHOULD CONSULT MORE CLOSELY ONCE AGAIN WHEN ISRAEL WAS READY TO PROVIDE DETAILS ON ITS VIEWS.

11. BEGIN WAS INTERRUPTED AT THIS POINT BY A MESSAGE FROM SHARON. HE THEN TOLD US THAT "WE HAVE NEWS THAT THE TERRORISTS HAVE KILLED PART OF OUR PRISONERS. LAST NIGHT WE THOUGHT THEY HAD ALL BEEN MASSACRED. NOW SHARON THINKS ONLY PART HAVE BEEN KILLED. WE HAVE OVER 3,000 PRISONERS BUT WE TREAT THEM HUMANELY." (NOTE: IN RESPONSE TO LEWIS' QUERY, BEGIN SAID HE THOUGHT THAT ABOUT SEVENTEEN ISRAELIS WERE IN PLO HANDS.) I IMMEDIATELY SAID I WOULD TRY URGENTLY WHEN I REACHED BEIRUT, AS MY FIRST PRIORITY, THROUGH THE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES, TO HELP ON THE ISRAELI PRISONER PROBLEM.

12. AS THE MEETING DREW TO AN END, I REVIEWED WITH BEGIN WHAT I PLANNED TO DO ON MY TRIP TO BEIRUT. I STRESSED THE NECESSITY OF LIFTING THE IMPRESSION OF ISRAELI INTIMIDATION OF THE LEBANESE CENTER OF GOVERNMENT. I WENT ON TO SAY THAT I WOULD DISCUSS WITH SARKIS AND OTHER LEBANESE LEADERS HOW TO MOVE TO CLOSER COOPERATION AMONG THE LEBANESE FACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE LEGITIMACY AND AUTHORITY OF THE

SECRET

SECRET

STATE

82 8824244

SSO

PAGE 008

NC 8824244

TOR: 141350Z JUN 82

EXDIS

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. I SAID THAT I WOULD RETURN WITHIN A FEW DAYS TO ISRAEL, UNFORTUNATELY, AFTER BEGIN'S DEPARTURE FOR THE U.S., AND THAT I WOULD PROBABLY GO THROUGH DAMASCUS ENROUTE. I SAID I WOULD NOT, HOWEVER, NEGOTIATE THE LEBANESE SITUATION IN SYRIA. BEGIN WISHED ME WELL, AND SAID THAT I COULD SPEAK FREELY AND FRANKLY--JUST AS I DID WITH HIM--WITH DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER ERHLICH, WHO WOULD BE IN CHARGE DURING HIS ABSENCE.

13. DAMASCUS MINIMIZE CONSIDERED. DEPT SHOULD CONSIDER REPEATING MESSAGE TO BEIRUT, DEPENDING ON CURRENT COMMO CAPABILITY AT BEIRUT EMBASSY. GROVE

END OF MESSAGE

SECRET